



Farm Labor News Release



In Cooperation with the Georgia Department of Agriculture

Georgia Field Office · 355 East Hancock Avenue, Suite 320 · Athens, GA 30601 · (706) 546-2236

www.nass.usda.gov

February 23, 2011

Media Contact: Douglas G. Kleweno

nass-ga@nass.usda.gov

HIRED WORKERS UP 1 PERCENT, WAGE RATES UP 2 PERCENT FROM A YEAR AGO

There were 807,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of January 9-15, 2011, up 1 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 602,000 were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 205,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$11.29 per hour during the January 2011 reference week, up 21 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$10.23 per hour, up 13 cents from last January, while livestock workers earned \$10.52 per hour compared with \$10.31 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$10.35 per hour, was up 17 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 38.9 for hired workers during the survey week, up 5 percent from a year ago.

The largest increases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in the Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota), Northeast I (New England and New York), and Mountain I (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming) regions. Subzero conditions and heavy snow in the Northern Plains region led to increased supplemental feeding, and early calving was underway. Therefore, more livestock workers were needed. Also, nursery and greenhouse operations required more workers to protect their crops against the bitter cold. In the Northeast I and Mountain I regions, the increase in hired workers was due to strong demand from the dairy industry.

The largest decreases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in the Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio), Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia), and Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas) regions. In both of the Corn Belt regions, mild conditions during last year's reference week allowed late corn harvest to progress. This year, a return to more normal winter weather patterns reduced the demand for hired workers. Reduced demand from the nursery and greenhouse industries in the Delta and Appalachian I regions kept hired worker numbers below last year. East Texas received four inches of rain, which slowed citrus and sugarcane harvests and lowered the need for hired workers in the Southern Plains region.

Hired worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina), Corn Belt I, and Northern Plains regions. In the Mountain III and Southeast regions, the higher wages were due to strong demand from the nursery and greenhouse industry. The higher wages in the Corn Belt I region were due to a higher percentage of supervisors. In the Northern Plains region, the higher wages were due to a larger percentage of more highly skilled workers on livestock operations.

Wage Rates by Type of Worker - Southeast Region and United States: January 2010 and 2011

	January 10-16, 2010			January 9-15, 2011		
	All Hired	Field	Livestock	All Hired	Field	Livestock
	--Dollars per Hour--					
Southeast^{1/}	9.40	9.01	8.74	10.50	9.26	11.16
US^{2/}	11.08	10.10	10.31	11.29	10.23	10.52

[Results from the Agricultural Labor Survey]. 1/ Southeast: AL, GA, SC. 2/ Excludes AK.